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MAR
WAGNER

YOUR WOUND IS NOT FATAL, CONAN, NOT YET! I WILL STRIKE ACROSS THE LEAGUES THAT SEPARATE US. YOU ARE NO ORDINARY MAN... YOU WILL DIE NO ORDINARY DEATH!

DARKNESS FALLS IN THE MOUNTAINS OF ZINGARA. CRASSUS, SWORN ENEMY OF CONAN, CONJURES A SPELL TO DESTROY THE KING OF AQUILONIA. HAVING FAILED IN HIS ATTEMPT TO USE CONAN'S SECOND SON, TAURUS, TO MURDER HIS FATHER, CRASSUS SUMMONS UP ALL OF HIS GROWING POWER FOR ONE MORE ATTEMPT ON CONAN'S LIFE. BUT, TAURUS, WHO HAS NO IDEA OF HIS REAL RELATIONSHIP TO CONAN, HAS GROWN SUSPICIOUS AS HIS FATHER LIES DYING IN...

DON'T HOLD ANYTHING BACK, CRASSUS. WHO IS KING CONAN? WHY WAS I PICKED TO TRY TO KILL HIM?

THE TOWER

CONAN THE KING™ Vol. 1, No. 39, March, 1987. (U.S.P.S. 589-610) Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP. James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice-President. Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH. NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. **SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.** Published bi-monthly. Copyright © 1986 by Conan Properties, Inc. CONAN THE KING (including all prominent characters featured in this issue) and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of Conan Properties, Inc. The advertising and editorial material appearing on pages 5, 7, 10, 12, 37, 39, 42, 44, covers 2, 3, and 4 only, copyright © 1986 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price $1.25 per copy in the U.S. and $1.50 in Canada. Subscription rate $12.00 for 12 issues. Canada and Foreign, $14.00. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO CONAN THE KING, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, 10TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016.**

TELL ME, CRAGGUS! I HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW!

GET THE BOY OUT OF MY SIGHT! HE DISTRACTS ME. I NEED ALL OF MY POWERS OF CONCENTRATION!

THE BLOOD OF THE SERPENT THAT FLOWS IN MY VEINS HAS MADE MY POWERS GROW AS NEVER BEFORE. NOW, WHILE THE STARS ARE RIGHT, I'LL SEIZE THE MOMENT TO GUIDE KING CONAN PAST THE GATES OF ARALLU.

AS MUCH AS THE GODS WILL ALLOW, RUFIO. BUT, HE'S BURNING WITH FEVER. HE MAY NOT LAST THE NIGHT.

PLEASE TELL US, ZELATA. CAN YOU HELP HIM?

AH, ZELATA. YOU APPEAR AS IF FROM NOWHERE TO WORK YOUR FEEBLE SPELLS AND DIVINE THE FATES. YOUR MAGIC IS OF NO USE AGAINST THE BLOOD OF THE SERPENT.

THIS POTION CAN BREAK THE FEVER AND MAKE HIM SWEAT OUT THE POISON. IT CAN KILL HIM OR CURE HIM. IT ALL DEPENDS ON HIS WILL TO LIVE.

THEN IT'S OUT OF OUR HANDS. ALL WE CAN DO IS WATCH AND WAIT.

IF HE SURVIVES UNTIL MORNING, WILL HE LIVE, ZELATA?

AYE, IF HE CAN PASS THE NIGHT. I HAVE DONE ALL THE GODS WILL ALLOW ME TO DO. REMEMBER, A GREAT DEAL CAN HAPPEN BETWEEN NOW AND DAWN.

AYE, YOU OLD CRONE, A GREAT DEAL CAN HAPPEN BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEW DAY-- AND IT WILL! HA, HA, HA, HA, HA...

AT THE AQUILONIAN CAMP IN ZINGARA...

WELCOME BACK, PRINCE CONN. PALANTIDES IS WAITING. HE HAS MUCH TO TELL YOU.

AND I HAVE MUCH TO TELL HIM.

PALLANTIDES, MY FATHER IS RESTING IN A SAFE PLACE. IT'S TIME MY MOTHER THE QUEEN WAS TOLD ABOUT HIS WOUND.

THANKS BE TO MITRA, MY PRINCE. BUT YOUR MOTHER LEFT FOR TARANTIA YESTERDAY, BEFORE THE NEWS OF YOUR FATHER'S CONDITION WAS MADE KNOWN.

SHE LEFT CAMP?! BUT, WHY?

IT WAS SOMETHING BETWEEN YOUR SISTER AND HER MAJESTY, MY PRINCE.

SHE LEFT BECAUSE WE FOUGHT, CONN, AND WE USED WORDS THAT SHOULD NEVER PASS BETWEEN A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

RADEGUND, THERE'S SOMETHING I MUST TELL YOU...SOMETHING THAT PALLANTIDES KEPT FROM YOU.

BRACE YOURSELF, RADEGUND...

IT'S FATHER, ISN'T IT? I CAN FEEL IT COMING.

HE LIES NEAR DEATH IN A TOWER IN THE MOUNTAINS. A CROSSBOW BOLT CAME WITHIN A FINGER'S WIDTH OF HIS HEART.

NO...

THE WOUND COULD BE MORTAL. HE MAY NOT SURVIVE THE NIGHT.

TAKE ME TO HIM! IT'S MY RIGHT. I CAN'T LET HIM DIE WITHOUT MAKING PEACE WITH HIM.

GET ME A MOUNTED ESCORT OR I'LL GO ALONE!

PALLANTIDES, I'M NOT READY TO RULE MY FATHER'S KINGDOM.

STEADY, CONN. I'LL SEND A COURIER TO BREAK THE NEWS TO THE QUEEN. WE'LL GET AN ESCORT FOR YOUR SISTER.

AT THE TOWER...

THAT'S FAR ENOUGH, SHEPHERD!

IT'S TIME YOU MET THE FIRST OF MY MINIONS. HE HAS WINE FOR YOU, WINE LACED WITH SOMETHING RIGHT FROM MY HEART.

YOU'RE FAR FROM YOUR NATIVE LAND, AREN'T YOU, NORTHMAN? IS IT TRUE WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE AESIR'S THIRST?

IF THAT'S A WINE-SKIN ON YOUR BACK, SHEPHERD, YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF.

IT'S FINEST ZINGARAN RED, CHEAP AT TWICE THE PRICE.

HARALD? HARALD! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?

UGGH...

P... POIS... POISON... THE SHEPHERD... THERE!

HEE HEE HEE HEE

POISON! THEN OUR ENEMIES HAVE DISCOVERED OUR WHEREABOUTS. THIS COULD ONLY BE CRASSUS'S DOING. ZELETA WAS RIGHT. THIS IS GOING TO BE A LONG NIGHT.

IN CRASSUS'S CASTLE...

AYE, MY LITTLE JESTER, THIS WILL BE A LONG NIGHT-- AND THE LAST NIGHT OF YOUR MISERABLE LIFE.

THE STARS ARE CONJOINED INTO A DEATH PORTAL FOR YOU, KING CONAN. TONIGHT YOU WILL PASS OUT OF THIS WORLD AND THROUGH THE GATES OF THE NETHER REALM.

FOR NOW, I'LL SUMMON UP CREATURES FROM THE FIEND-HAUNTED SWAMPS AND GHOUL-HAUNTED FORESTS OF ZINGARA TO DO MY BIDDING.

IN THE MOUNTAIN PASS THAT LEADS TO THE TOWER...

THE PLACE YOU SEEK IS ONLY ANOTHER LEAGUE AHEAD, MY LADY.

YOU'RE VERY KIND, SHEPHERD. WE WOULD HAVE BEEN LOST WITHOUT YOU.

NOT AT ALL, MY LADY.

RIDE ON, MY PRINCESS, RIDE ON...

"AYE, RIDE ON, PRINCESS RADEGUND, THE SOONER YOU REACH THE TOWER, THE CLOSER I'LL BE TO DESTROYING CONAN AND ALL HIS KIN."

KRABASH

"YOU ESCAPED ME ONCE. BUT NOT THIS TIME."

SURELY, THIS IS SOME SORCERY!

I CAN FEEL CRASSUS'S DARK HAND IN ALL OF THIS.

THERE'S NO DOUBT OF IT NOW. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS IN MY WORST NIGHTMARES!

RUFIO, RUFIO... IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, OPEN THE DOOR OR I'M DOOMED!

AGHHEEEEEEEEEEEEE...

RUFIO...!!

QUICKLY, WE'VE GOT TO REACH THE PRINCESS! THERE ISN'T A MOMENT TO SPARE WITH THESE THINGS LURKING ABOUT!

RUFIO...!

STAY DOWN, MY PRINCESS, WE'LL SOON HAVE YOU INSIDE AND OUT OF HARM'S WAY!

WHAT ARE THESE *THINGS*, RUFIO? WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?

THEY'RE *THINGS*! LEGEND HAS IT THAT THE SWAMPS AND FORESTS OF ZINGARA ARE FULL OF THEM. UNFORTUNATELY, WE KNOW THE TRUTH!--*NOW HURRY!*

BJORN, BJORN, OPEN THE DOOR FOR THE LOVE OF MITRA!

RUFIO, WHAT ABOUT THE AESIR?

GET INSIDE, MY PRINCESS, AND I'LL TRY TO HELP THEM!

GET IN AND BOLT THE DOOR, RUFIO! THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO FOR ME!

THESE AESIR ARE WINE-SOAKED, WENCHING BRAGGARTS, BUT THEY WERE BORN TO DO BATTLE!

BY YMIR, I'LL AVENGE THEM!

HAVE COURAGE, MY PRINCESS YOU'LL NEED IT BEFORE THE NIGHT IS OVER

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YES, YES, I'M JUST SHAKEN THAT'S ALL

TAKE ME TO HIM, RUFIO I HAVE TO SEE HIM.

DON'T BE SO QUICK TO MOURN HIM ZELATA SAID IT WAS UP TO HIS WILL TO LIVE, AND WE KNOW ABOUT THE KING'S WILL, DON'T WE?

THIS IS ALL CRASSUS'S WORK. ONLY *HE* COULD HAVE SUMMONED UP SUCH FIENDS.

AYE, IT'S CRASSUS'S WORK ALL RIGHT EVEN THAT ARROW THAT NEARLY ENTERED HIS HEART.

FATHER!

IF YOU COULD ONLY HEAR ME... IF I COULD ONLY FIND THE WORDS TO MAKE YOU FORGIVE ME FOR THE WAY I'VE TREATED YOU...

ZELATA GAVE HIM A POTION TO MAKE HIM SWEAT OUT THE FEVER IT WILL EITHER KILL HIM OR CURE HIM WE WON'T KNOW UNTIL DAWN

HE'S SO STILL RUFIO HE'S HOVERING BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

NOW IF WE CAN ONLY HOLD OFF THESE MONSTERS UNTIL DAYBREAK...

AT THE CHEAD
A CRY HEARD IN...

"RISE UP MY MINIONS. RISE UP AND SLAY THEM ALL!"

"SLAY THEM SLOWLY. SLAY THEM CRUELLY. BUT MAKE CERTAIN THAT NOT ONE OF THEM ESCAPES."

HOW LONG CAN WE HOLD BACK THESE DEMONS RUFIO?

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BJORN, MY FRIEND, BUT I'LL FIGHT AS LONG AS I DRAW BREATH AND HAVE BLOOD TO SHED

FATHER, I HAVE NO RIGHT TO TOUCH YOU. LEWIS'S DEATH WAS NEVER YOUR FAULT * EVEN DERLETH KNOWS YOU HAD NO CHOICE WHEN YOU SLEW HIS FATHER **

PLEASE FORGIVE ME

* SEE ISSUE # 30.
** SEE ISSUE # 31.

YOU HOVER ON THE LINE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH, CONAN THE SPELL I CAST NOW WILL USHER YOU BEYOND INTO THE NETHER WORLD

"YOUR FUNERAL BIER IS PREPARED AND YOUR PALL-BEARERS AWAIT, O KING."

"THE FUNERAL BARGE IS DRAWN UP ON THE SHORE OF THAT GREAT STREAM WHICH EACH MAN ONLY CROSSES ONCE."

"AND THERE TO SEE THAT YOU MAKE YOUR JOURNEY IS A FAMILIAR FACE. DO YOU KNOW HIM CONAN?"

WE MEET AGAIN, O KING.

"AYE, IT'S DEXITHEUS, THE LATE HIGH PRIEST OF MITRA. I SENT HIM ON HIS JOURNEY, TOO

*SEE ISSUE #31.

MEANWHILE

HAVE A LITTLE PATIENCE BJORN I DON'T WANT TO SERVE THIS HATEW UNTIL IT'S JUST RIGHT!

YOU SOUND LIKE SOME INFERNAL COOK WITH HIS RECIPES RUBIO. BY THE GODS, IT'S JUST BOILING OIL!

AYE, BUT I WANT THESE FIENDS TO DRINK DEEP, BJORN!

SWALLOW THIS!

EEEIIIAAAHHHHHHHOOOOWWWW!

AT THE AQUILONIAN ARMY'S ENCAMPMENT, HAGAN AND DERYCK RETURN FROM SCOUTING THE ENEMY LINES.

DERYCK, YOU'RE A PROUD FOOL TO SPURN PRINCESS RADEGUND.

HOW CAN I FORGET THAT HER FATHER, THE KING, SLEW MY OWN FATHER, HAGAN?

YOU LOVE HER, JUST THE SAME YOU KNOW THAT.

I WOULDN'T LIFT A HAND FOR HER WHEN THE COMING BATTLE IS OVER I'LL LEAVE CONAN'S SERVICE FOREVER.

DERYCK...

BY YMIR, I CAN'T SEE A THING..

ZELATA-- HAVE YOU APPEARED AGAIN TO MEDDLE IN MY FATE?

THE GODS HAVE DECREED YOUR FATE. PRINCESS RADEGUND IS IN GREAT DANGER AT THE TOWER. THE FUTURE OF GENERATIONS DEPENDS ON WHETHER OR NOT YOU REACH HER BEFORE DAWN.

HAGAN, I'M GOING TO NEED YOUR SPARE HORSE!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING IN THIS STORM? THAT'S THE LAST FRESH HORSE IN CAMP!

RADEGUND IS IN DANGER AT THE TOWER! TELL THE PRINCE AND GATHER THE MEN! I'LL RIDE AHEAD!

WHAT ARE YOU RAVING ABOUT BOY? YOU'RE AS HEADSTRONG AND STUBBORN AS YOUR FATHER WAS! DO YOU KNOW THAT?!

AND IN THE TOWER

BY THE TALONS OF YMIR. I'LL SEND YOU ALL BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM BEFORE I JOIN YOU!

RUFIO, WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER ON THE OTHER SIDE I'LL SAVE A PLACE FOR YOU.

BJORN! BJORN!

YMIR HAVE MERCY ON HIM HE DESERVED A NOBLER DEATH

HELP ME RUFIO, BAR THE DOOR!

THERE YOU SPAWN OF THE PIT, THAT'S FOR BJORN!

RUFIO, IS THERE ANY HOPE FOR RESCUE BEFORE DAWN?

YOU'D KNOW BETTER THAN I WOULD, PRINCESS. CONN PROMISED TO SEND REINFORCEMENTS BY FIRST LIGHT TOMORROW. BUT, HE CAN'T KNOW ABOUT THIS.

RUFIO, THE TIME IS FAST APPROACHING WHEN YOUR LEVITY WON'T HELP YOU.

BUT AT THE [illegible]

"THE TENDER LOVING [illegible] SPIRIT IS UPPERM[illegible]T IN MY MIN[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

"THE VOYAGE IS BRIEF AND PAINLESS, CONAN YOUR SPIRIT WILL AWAKEN IN A NEW REALM FULL OF THINGS BOTH STRANGE AND FAMILIAR."

"EVEN NOW YOUR SPIRIT BESTIRS ITSELF, BUT TOO LATE FOR YOU TO CROSS THE GREAT STREAM AGAIN."

CROM..

"NO, CROM WON'T HELP YOU. NOW THE GATES ARE OPENING FOR YOU. WHEN THEY CLOSE, THERE'LL BE NO RETURN. YOUR SPIRIT WILL BE EMBRACED BY THE WAITING ARMS OF DEATH."

[illegible]

[illegible]

BY YMR [illegible] SUCH FURY!

ZELATA YOU ALWAYS POINT THE WAY TO MY DESTINY

BUT YOU NEVER SHOW ME HOW TO GET THERE

HASAN ALWAYS [illegible] GUIDING SPIRIT

NOW I FIND OUT WHAT HASAN WAS RIGHT!

MEANWHILE...

YOU'RE A HUNGRY DEVIL, AREN'T YOU? I'LL SATISFY YOUR APPETITE!

EAT THIS!

GREAT MITRA!

HERE-- FEED ON THIS!

STAY UPSTAIRS AND BAR THE DOOR, PRINCESS!

RUFIO IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME NOW...

FATHER-- FATHER, I NEED YOU!

FATHER, I LOVE [illegible] I NEVER KNEW WHO I WAS UNTIL I NEVER KNEW HOW TO SAY IT IN THE PAST NOW YOU MAY NEVER HEAR ME

AH, RICH SWEET WORDS [illegible] BACKGROUND HOW TENDER HOW TOUCHING... NOW USELESS!

RUFIO, DON'T LET THAT THING TOUCH HIM.

STAY BACK, PRINCE [illegible] IF THERE'S ONE THING I'VE LEARNED ABOUT THESE GHOULS..

IT IS THAT THE ONLY THING THEY [illegible] EAT IS FIRE!

IT SEEMS THEY DON'T AGREE WITH THEM

BY ALL THE GODS ZELATA WAS RIGHT BUT I CAN'T SEE WHAT A LONE MAN CAN DO AGAINST THIS HORDE OF DEVILS!

I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO RESCUE RAVEGUND

BUT I'LL SHARE HER FATE RATHER THAN LOSE HER!

RAVEGUND RUFIO IT'S DERYCK! OPEN THE DOOR BEFORE I'M TORN TO PIECES!

HOW DO WE KNOW IT'S REALLY YOU AND NOT SOME SORCERY?

YOU DON'T! YOU'LL HAVE TO LIVE DANGEROUSLY! NOW OPEN UP!

"... LIVE DANGEROUSLY?!" WHAT DO YOU THINK WE'VE BEEN DOING ALL NIGHT?!

GODS BE PRAISED!

MITRA! I DON'T KNOW WHICH OF US IS BETTER SUITED TO BE A JESTER, YOU OR ME?--"LIVE DANGEROUSLY!!!"

RUFIO YOU TALK TOO MUCH! BE QUIET AND LISTEN.

ON THE COUNT OF THREE HELP ME PUT THIS BEAM IN PLACE--ONE, TWO...

...THREE!

HOW DID YOU KNOW WE NEEDED HELP? WHO SENT YOU, DERYCK?

ZELATA, WHO ELSE? SHE SEEMS TO BE CONCERNED WITH MY FATE RIGHT NOW I WISH SHE WOULDN'T CONCERN HERSELF SO MUCH?

WHERE'S RADEGUND?

DERYCK? IS IT REALLY YOU? HAVE YOU LOST YOUR SENSES COMING HERE?

IT'S ME, RADEGUND I HAVEN T LOST MY SENSES I'VE COME TO THEM.

THEN YOU'VE ONLY COME TO SHARE DEATH WITH ME.

IF WE CAN'T LIVE TOGETHER, THEN WE'LL DIE TOGETHER.

THAT MAY BE SOONER THAN YOU THINK!

GO WITH RADEGUND, DERYCK. I CAN HOLD THE DOOR A LITTLE WHILE

HOW IS YOUR FATHER, RADEGUND?

HOW OR WHERE?

HE'S SOMEWHERE BETWEEN HERE AND DEATH THAT'S ALL I KNOW

AGGHEEEEE..

STOP THAT THING, DERYCK. PLEASE...

"YOU'RE BRAVE, DERYCK, SO VERY BRAVE. NOT THAT IT WILL DO ANY GOOD. YOU'VE GIVEN CONAN ALL THE HELP YOU CAN."

SOON, HE'LL BE BEYOND MORTAL HELP!

AYE, SO VERY VERY SOON.

DO YOU KNOW THIS PLACE CONAN? TELL ME! DO YOU KNOW IT?

ARALLU!

ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE MET YOUR DEATHS AT HIS HANDS AND GREET YOUR NEW COMRADE!

WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!

WELCOME, CONAN!

WE KNEW YOU'D COME!

YOUR TIME HAS COME, CONAN! THIS IS THE TIME WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!

WELCOME CONAN

'AYE, ARALLU WHERE COMMONERS AND KINGS ARE EQUAL! HERE THE SPIRITS OF ALL THOSE YOU HAVE SLAIN IN LIFE AWAIT TO TORMENT YOU FOR ALL ETERNITY

...BLACK DRAGONS...? YOU'RE NO BLACK DRAGONS! YOU'RE THE FIENDS OF THE PIT!

THIS IS THE BLACKEST SORCERY THAT I'VE EVER SEEN!

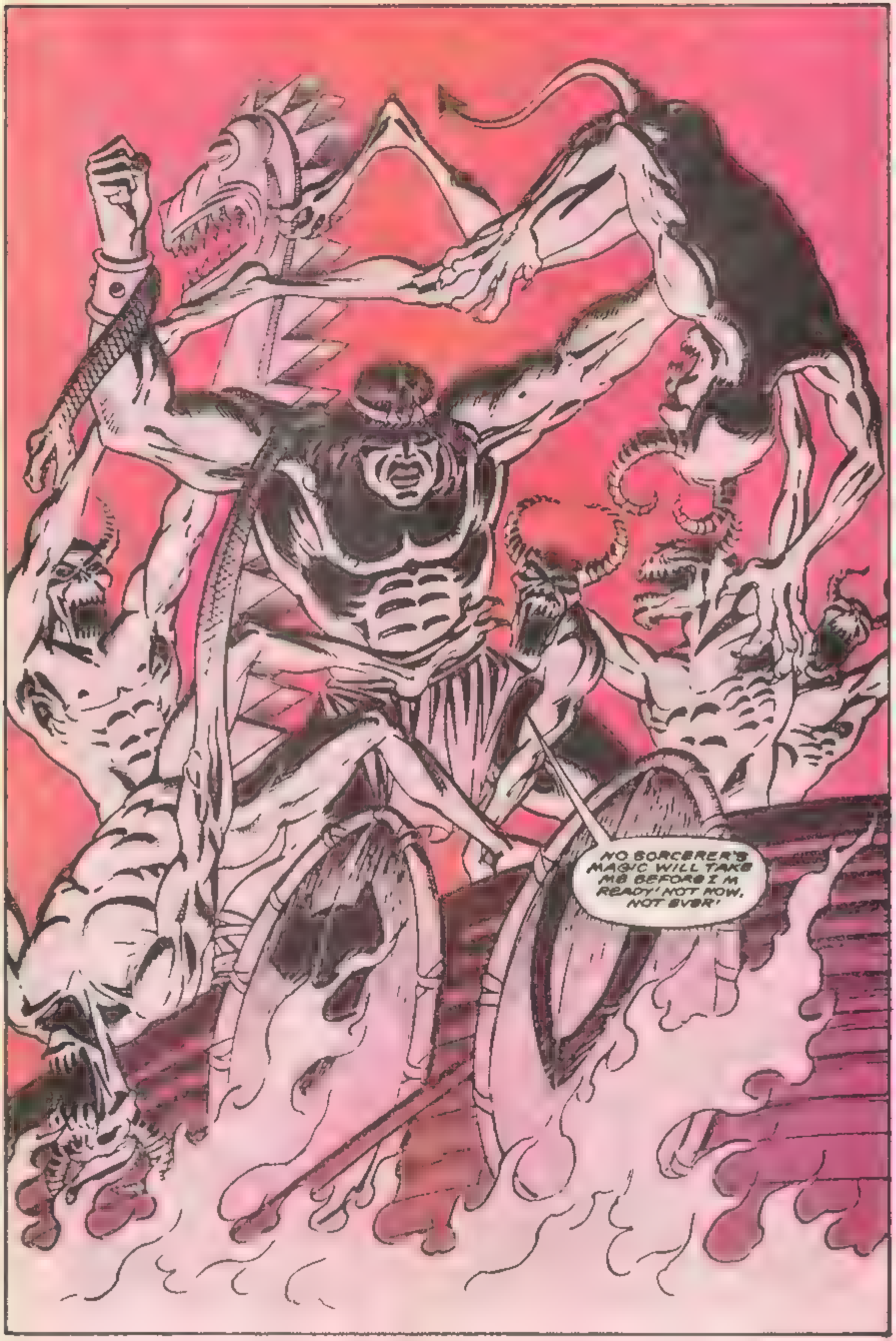
CONAN!

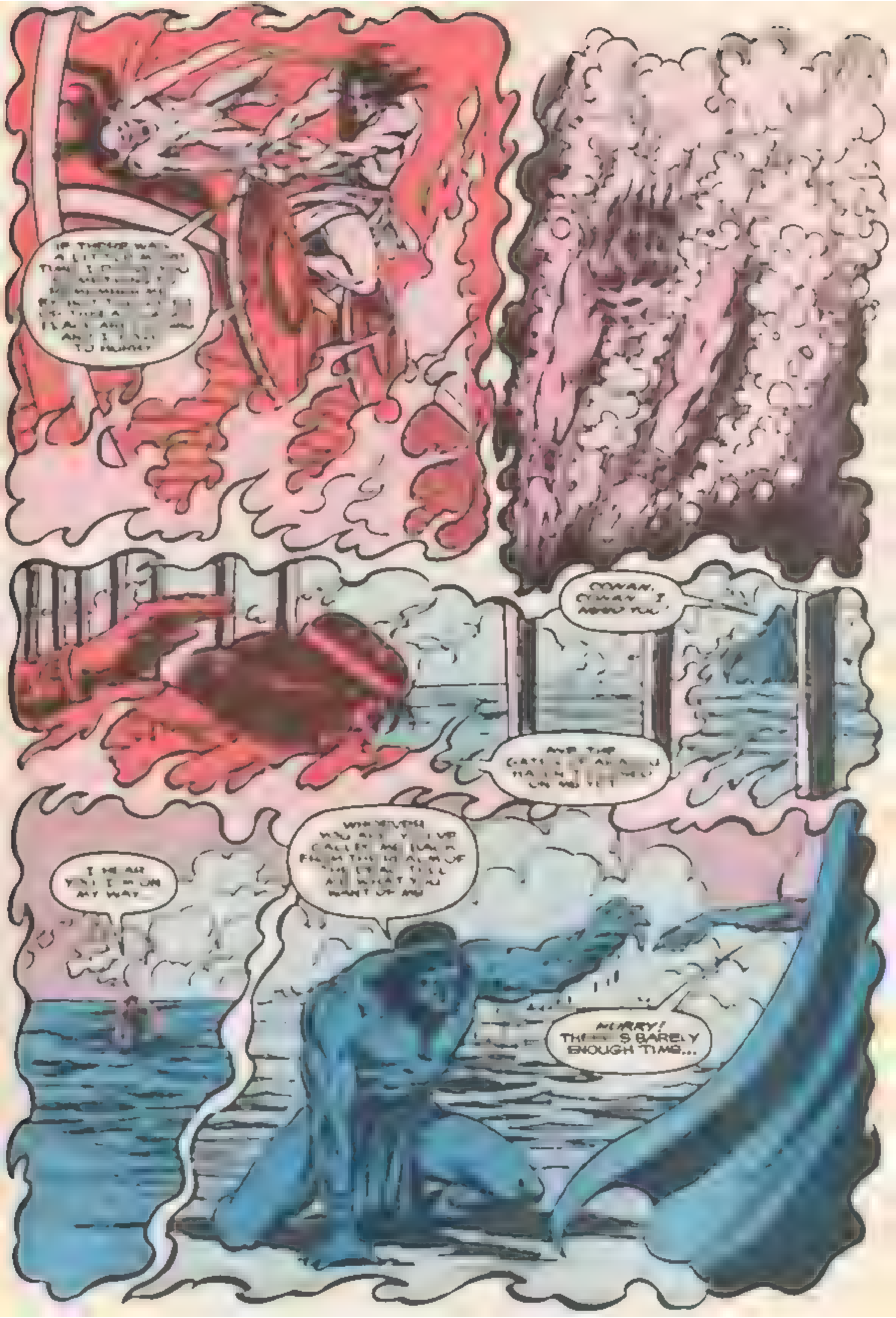
THAT VOICE...! I KNOW IT!

COME BACK!

HELP ME!

SORCERY OR NOT, NOT EVEN THE DEMONS OF ARALU WILL TAKE ME WITHOUT A FIGHT!


NO SORCERER'S MAGIC WILL TAKE ME BEFORE I'M READY! NOT NOW, NOT EVER!


I HEAR YOU! I'M ON MY WAY!
MURRAY! THERE'S BARELY ENOUGH TIME...

AGHHEEEEEEEE...!

CROM AND YMIR! I'M DROWNING IN MY OWN SWEAT! WHAT PLACE IS TH.. IT'S THE TOWER-- I'M BACK IN THE TOWER!

THAT VOICE.. BY THE GODS, I KNOW THAT VOICE BETTER THAN MY OWN!

AGHBEEEGG..

MY HAND IS ITCHING FOR THE FEEL OF THIS.

IF I'M GOING TO DIE, AT LEAST I'LL HAVE A SWORD IN MY HAND!

YOU'RE MY FLESH AND BLOOD RADEGUND THERE'S NO DENYING THAT.

FATHER! YOU'RE ALIVE AND BACK WITH US!

AYE, BACK FROM THE DEAD IT WAS YOUR VOICE THAT SUMMONED ME BACK TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING.

AND WHAT SHOULD WE DO, MY LIEGE?

OH FATHER, I LOVE YOU! I ALWAYS DID!

GOOD! THEN MAYBE YOU'LL DO AS YOU'RE TOLD FOR ONCE!

RADEGUND, GET INTO THE CORNER STAY THERE! RUFIO, STAY WITH HER AND PROTECT HER

GET BEHIND ME, MY PRINCESS. THE AIR WILL BE FILLED WITH FLASHING SWORDS IN A MOMENT

DERYCK, KEEP YOUR BACK TO MINE AS LONG AS YOU CAN I'M GOING TO TRY TO REACH THE DOOR.

AYE, YOUR MAJESTY.

IT'S TIME WE SHED SOME LIGHT ON THIS SORCERY!

LOOK, RADEGUND, THE SUN IS RISING!

IT'S DAYBREAK, TIME FOR THE FORCES OF DARKNESS TO RETREAT.

AYE, YOUR MAJESTY, THEY'RE CREATURES OF DARKNESS THEIR STRENGTH IS IN EVIL AND THE NIGHT

YOU'RE RIGHT, RUFIO THEY WITHER AND DIE IN THE SUNLIGHT.

GOOD RIDDANCE.

ONE DAY, CRASSUS WILL JOIN THEM.

FATHER! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

HE'S OVER-EXERTED HIMSELF!

CROM'S BLOOD..

DERYCK... RUFIO PLEASE HELP HIM BACK TO BED.

AHHH...

YOU'VE REOPENED YOUR WOUND. YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE GOTTEN OUT OF BED.

STEADY. LEAN ON ME

RUFIO, YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND.

BE STILL. OR YOU'LL BLEED TO DEATH.

WELL, DERYCK, THERE'S SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND OUT WITH IT!

I WAS WRONG TO HOLD MY FATHER'S DEATH AGAINST YOU. HE WOULDN'T HAVE WANTED THAT. I KNOW THAT NOW.

AND WHAT ELSE?

I WANT TO ASK FOR RADEGUND'S HAND IN MARRIAGE.

ARE YOU SURE, DERYCK? SHE'S HEADSTRONG AND STUBBORN--NEVER DOES WHAT SHE'S TOLD.

THEY'RE SURE, YOUR MAJESTY. DEPEND ON IT.

I LOVE RADEGUND AND SHE LOVES ME. WELL HAVE I YOUR PERMISSION? OR DO I HAVE TO STEAL HER?

OH!!!

YOU'RE MADE OF THE SAME STUFF AS YOUR FATHER WAS, DERYCK. THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU. I'D BE PROUD TO HAVE YOU AS MY SON-IN-LAW.

BUT, AS FOR THIS BUSINESS OF BEING IN LOVE...

...IF YOU TWO HAVE ANY MORE SURPRISES, SAVE THEM UNTIL I'M FEELING BETTER

FATHER HELP ME!

THEY'RE BACK!

RADEGUND, GET DOWN!

DO AS YOU'RE TOLD, GIRL!

LEAVE THIS ONE TO ME!

I JUST WISH IT WAS CRASSUS!

FIVE MOONS LATER

CONAN . I MEAN, YOUR MAJESTY! YOU'RE NOT DEAD ..' I MEAN, YOU'RE *ALIVE!*

AYE. THANKS TO RUFIO MY DAUGHTER, AND MY FUTURE SON-IN-LAW IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR THEM I WOULD BE BEYOND THE GATES OF ARALLU NOW.

FUTURE SON-IN-LAW? YOU MEAN *OGRYCAT* BY YMIR THEY'LL GIVE YOU NOTHING BUT HEADSTRONG, STUBBORN GRANDCHILDREN

AYE THAT THEY WILL

GOOD TO SEE YOU, HAGAN. IT'S GOOD TO BE ALIVE.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE *YOU* ALIVE

I WOULDN'T BE, IF THAT ARROW HAD STRUCK ME A THUMB'S WIDTH TO THE LEFT.

BUT I AM STILL BREATHING CRASSUS *AND I'M WAITING FOR YOU.*

AND IN A CASTLE IN ZINGARA...

NO... NO... I HAD HIM IN MY GRASP! I HAD HIM... AND HE SLIPPED FAST ME!

THERE MUST BE ONE MORE SPELL... AT LEAST ONE MORE... IF ONLY I COULD THINK OF IT... IF ONLY I WASN'T EXHAUSTED.

THERE'S STILL ONE MORE WEAPON I CAN USE AGAINST HIM. THIS TIME I WON'T LET IT FAIL ME.

FETCH THE BOY TAURUS! *AT ONCE!*

MY LORD, CRASSUS, I FEAR TO TELL YOU, BUT HE ESCAPED IN THE NIGHT WITHOUT A TRACE.

ESCAPED! ESCAPED PAST STONE AND IRON!

SO, TAURUS, YOU'VE LEARNED TO USE MORE OF YOUR POWERS!

YOU'VE GONE TO JOIN CONAN, HAVEN'T YOU? THEN YOU'LL KNOW THE TRUTH! BUT I'LL FIND YOU! AND WHEN I DO, I'LL DESTROY YOU ALL!

AND I'LL DESTROY YOU, TAURUS, BEFORE YOU DESTROY ME!

KING CONAN

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Attention correspondents: If you don't want your full address printed, please be sure to tell us so!

Dog Brothers,

I just finished issue #37 of CONAN THE KING. After an average day of demolition work, I was geared up for some swordplay and excitement. What a payback!

My blood's still burning with the feeling of conquest. There's nothing I like better than a good siege. When Conan's troops marched over Belverus, I felt like I was alongside the brigade of barbarians with crimson-tainted steel in grip (yeah, I've been a freebooter from the start). As always, the art is as flawless as the writing.

I must mount my trusty steed and be off for now; long live the King!

More wenches, and what about Kaluta?

Greg Mayfield
Mobile, Alabama

Kaluta is working on the SHADOW Graphic Novel at the time being.

Dear Folks,

First of all, let me tell you that I enjoy reading your magazine. Whatever criticism I have to offer is tendered with affection.

In issue #37, I particularly liked the upper right hand panel where Conan is saying, "I came to Nemedia to conquer—not to strike bargains." The shadows on his face made him appear old, yet his features showed strength.

The CONAN THE KING magazine makes it seem that he garnered his army from all around the known world. I can't accept this as being realistic. Mercenary bands were often a mixed group, but were expensive to keep and usually hired only if there was actually a war in the offing. To keep a standing army from many lands would make the native Aquilonians suspicious. Conan had a strong personality, but he was also an outlaw in at least half the kingdoms he had traveled through by the time he became King of the Aquilonians. Of course, you could always say this is high fantasy and throw realism out the window.

As for Deryck, I feel inclined to say he would think of stealing Radegund away and seeing to it that her father never saw her again for a fine vengeance. He's a jerk for acting as if she put his father to the sword herself. If he's really so angry, it would have come to a duel of death between him and Conan by now. By the way, I like the name Radegund very much. What is its origin? Old English?

Despite my criticism, it is plain to me that CONAN THE KING is a well-orchestrated magazine with many plot tie-ins from way back. I am thinking especially of Taurus, the false prince. I am sure that if Conan had a son who dabbled in black magic, he would have wrung his neck personally. I have faith in Conan's real son. He's going to turn on the kidnapers.

I would finally like to thank Marvel for bringing Robert E. Howard's work to light after so many years during which sword 'n' sorcery was science fiction's deprived brother. Who is responsible?

Blessings be,
Athena Thunder Rider Morgan

Radegund is basically an old name. Norse, by way of Old English. Red Sonja got canceled.

Dear Conan lovers and Marvel People,

I'm gonna make this short and sweet! Please end this really boring war!!! I'm gettin' pretty tired of it!! I liked this comic better when Conan was romping around the countryside shooting white stags and beatin' up big bad monsters! I mean, come on! A guy can only take so much of this war business!

Stephen Hill
Madison, CT.

Dear Marvel,

I really enjoy your CONAN comic. I was wondering—is there a comic book about Conn? If so, how can I get it?

Keep up the great work.

Laura Jamieson
Ellaville, GA

No. You'll have to be satisfied by reading about Conn's part in CONAN THE KING. CONAN THE KING is the only book in which Conn appears at all.

Dear Barbarians,

I've been reading CONAN THE KING. I loved issue #36. You guys know how to make somebody ready for the next issue. There is one question. Why don't you have Conan fight more? His son does more fighting than Conan does. And I've been collecting CONAN THE BARBARIAN for a long time, so I see Conan do a lot of killing. Please, have him do more killing than his son.

Doug Chamberlain
Midland, Texas

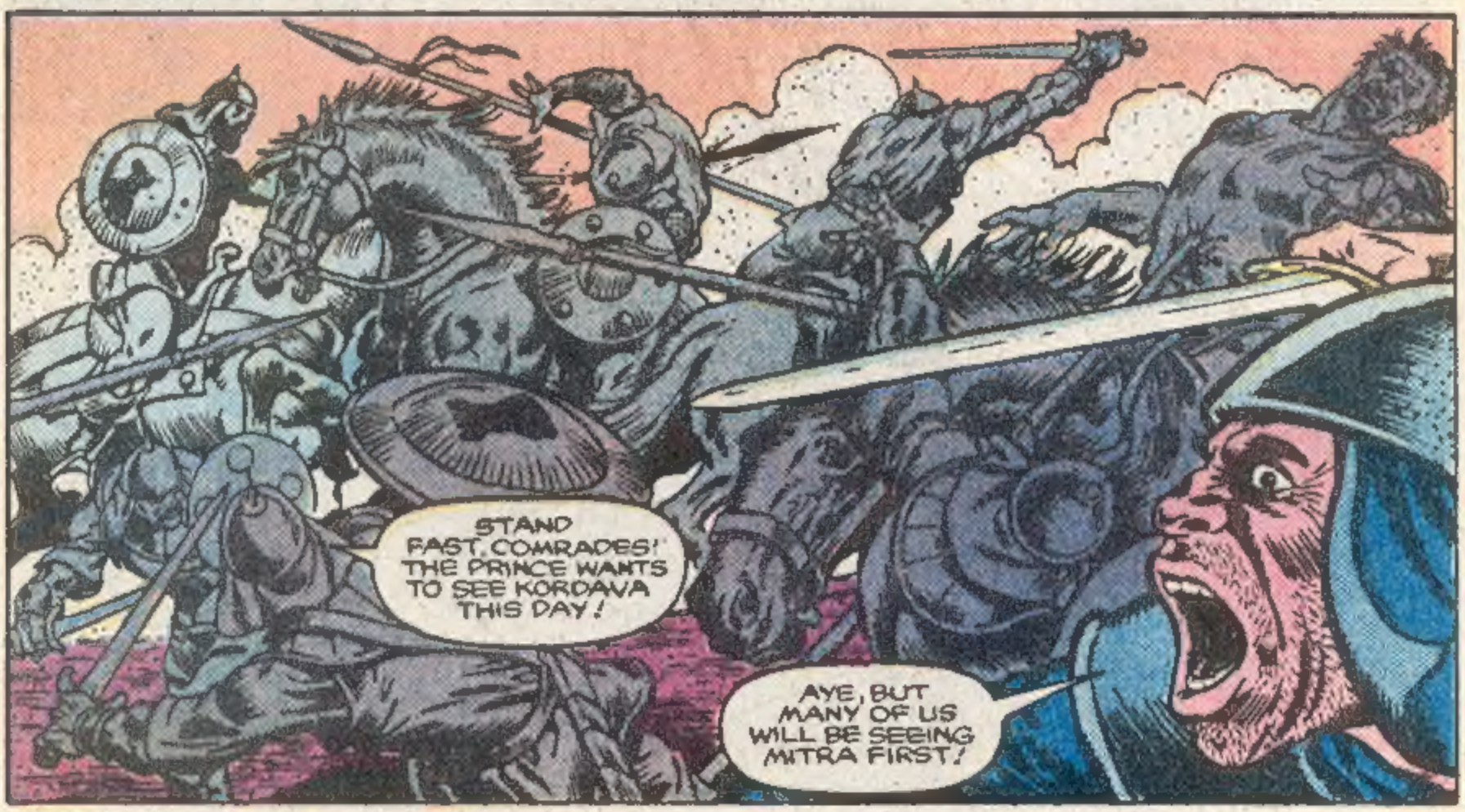
King Conan is getting on in years, and young Conn is rough and ready.

Dear CTK,

I don't read your comic books regularly. Actually, your 36th issue is the only one I've ever read. I'm nine years old, and I like your comic books.

Alexander Solyom
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Thanks, Alex.



BULLPEN BULLETINS

About ten years ago, a lawyer friend of mine told me that I could sue DC Comics for a million dollars or more. The lawyer, a lady who'd worked in the comics business for many years, had discovered that I'd started writing professionally for DC Comics in 1965 when I was *thirteen years old*, and had written many dozens of stories for DC's top-selling titles while I was between the ages of thirteen and eighteen. Because I was a *minor*, she said, the legal agreements that I'd signed granting DC ownership of the stories I'd written and the characters I'd created (two of which were featured in their own series) were meaningless. She told me that I *owned* those stories, and would be entitled to all the income DC had received from licensing them for publication worldwide, or statutory copyright damages, whichever was greater. She said the case was airtight, and urged me to pursue it.

I never even considered it for a moment.

You see, I'd been offered the same deal as everybody else in comics in those days, and, minor or not, I'd understood it perfectly. Moreover, I'd agreed to it *enthusiastically*—thrilled to have the chance to write comics, and very glad to be paid what I was paid, because my family *needed* that money.

It wouldn't be right to go back on the deal.

Recently, a reporter from Phoenix asked me, "Do you think your comics provide good role models for your younger readers?" That's a pretty standard question, and I gave it the standard answer—that providing good role models is not our goal. We don't try to preach morals or values—business, we feel, best left to parents and educators. We're *entertainers*. Our business is telling good stories.

He seemed happy with that answer, and the interview moved on. Since then, however, I've given that subject more thought. The fact is that a *good* story must leave the reader with something more than he started with—a thought, an idea, an insight . . . What thoughts, ideas and insights were conveyed to *me* when I was a reader?

The Amazing Spider-Man was my favorite title back then. I identified with Peter Parker, because he and his Aunt May had money troubles just like my family did. Often his need was desperate, and he was faced with a choice between doing the self-serving, expedient thing and doing the *right* thing. He wasn't a paragon. Once or twice he slipped. Hey, he was only human. But, you know, I could tell that he learned from his mistakes, and in the end, when it counted, he always chose to do the *right* thing.

My lawyer friend's name came up in conversation the other day, reminding me of my choice not to sue DC. It occurred to me then that Peter Parker wouldn't have done it either.

Jim Shooter
Editor in Chief

CHECKLIST

☐ **DAKOTA NORTH #6**
☐ **DAREDEVIL #239**
☐ **G.I. JOE SPECIAL MISSIONS #3**
☐ **NEW MUTANTS #48**—Vs. the Sentinels of the future!
☐ **STRIKEFORCE: MORITURI #3**—Their first mission against the Horde!
☐ **TRANSFORMERS: THE MOVIE (Limited Series) #3**
☐ **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #23**
☐ **WEST COAST AVENGERS #17**
☐ **COMET MAN (Limited Series) #1**—Dr. Stephen Beckley discovers the secret of Halley's Comet—and it destroys him! This incredible space adventure could have been created only by someone who's been there! Created and written by BILL ("Lost in Space") MUMY and MIGUEL FERRER! Art by KELLY JONES and GERRY TALAOC!
☐ **CONAN ANNUAL #10**
☐ **ALPHA FLIGHT #43**
☐ **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #265**—With the Punisher and Hobgoblin!
☐ **CAPTAIN AMERICA #326**
☐ **DOCTOR STRANGE #81**—Introducing Rintah!
☐ **G.I. JOE AND TRANSFORMERS (Limited Series) #2**—Cobra and the Decepticons become allies!
☐ **POWER PACK #28**—A visit to Avengers Mansion!
☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR VS. THE X-MEN (Limited Series) #1**—Has Reed Richards betrayed the FF? What's he doing with the X-Men? And now will he betray them, too? Find out in this 4-issue Limited Series by CHRIS CLAREMONT (writer) with JON BOGDANOVE and TERRY AUSTIN (artists)!
☐ **AVENGERS #276**—The Masters of Evil!
☐ **CONAN THE BARBARIAN #191**
☐ **G.I. JOE #56**
☐ **HOWARD THE DUCK (Limited Series) #3**
☐ **INCREDIBLE HULK #328**
☐ **MARVEL TALES #196**—Reprinting *Marvel Team-Up #62* by CHRIS CLAREMONT and JOHN BYRNE.
☐ **THE 'NAM #3**—Off to Saigon on a "Three Day Pass!" Story by Vietnam vet DOUG MURRAY. Art by MICHAEL GOLDEN and ARMANDO GIL.
☐ **X-MEN #214**—The aftermath of the Mutant Massacre by CHRIS CLAREMONT and BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH!
☐ **MARVEL SAGA #15**—The origins of Hawkeye and Wonder Man! The Avengers vs. Kang! Spidey meets Daredevil! And more!
☐ **TRANFORMERS UNIVERSE (Limited Series) #3**
☐ **SPIDER-MAN VS. WOLVERINE #1**—In East Berlin, Spidey finds out that spies play for keeps! But there's someone even more deadly—Wolverine! Written by JIM OWSLEY! Art by MARK BRIGHT and AL WILLIAMSON!
☐ **FANTASTIC FOUR #299**
☐ **IRON MAN #215**—DAVID MICHELINIE and BOB LAYTON are back! And they got MARK BRIGHT with them!
☐ **PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #123**—With the Black Cat!
☐ **THOR #376**—A bone-breaking battle with the Absorbing Man!
☐ **TRANSFORMERS #25**
☐ **X-FACTOR #13**—Cyclops battles a Sentinel!
☐ **CLASSIC X-MEN #8**—Reprinting *X-Men #98*, with new material by CHRIS CLAREMONT and JOHN BOLTON.
☐ **G.I. JOE ORDER OF BATTLE (Limited Series) #4**—Also known as "G.I. Joe Universe!"
☐ **G.I. JOE DIGEST #2**

MARVEL MAGAZINES

☐ **MARVEL AGE #47**—The only place to go for info about everything you see here! Plus, behind the scenes at the New Universe!
☐ **SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #132**

EPIC COMICS

☐ **MOONSHADOW (Limited Series) #11**—The true tale of Ira's origin!
☐ **GROO THE WANDERER #24**
☐ **ELEKTRA: ASSASSIN (Limited Series) #5**—Elektra and Garrett take on SHIELD and Washington, D.C. By FRANK MILLER and BILL SIENKIEWICZ.
☐ **ALIEN LEGION #17**—Under suspicion of murder!
☐ **ELFQUEST #19**
☐ **STEELGRIP STARKEY (Limited Series) #3**—The latest and the greatest!

STAR COMICS

☐ **HUGGA BUNCH #3**—The Huglets disappear!
☐ **THUNDERCATS #8**
☐ **ANIMAX #2**—X-Tinctor and the Motor Mutants lay siege to the city of Animax!
☐ **HEATHCLIFF #14!**
☐ **DROIDS #6**—Guest-starring the entire "Star Wars" crew!
☐ **POPPLES #2**
☐ **TOP DOG #12**—Speechless!
☐ **STAR DIGEST #2**—With Heathcliff, Top Dog, Care Bears and more!

NEW UNIVERSE

☐ **NIGHT MASK #4**—She's alluring and deadly! She's Mistress Twilight! Night Mask must resist her . . . but can he?
☐ **PSI FORCE #4**—Kathy goes home . . . with incredible consequences!
☐ **KICKERS, INC. #4**—They fight dirty 'cause they're the *Fist*, and they're after Jack's head!
☐ **MERC #4**—Hazzard faces criminal charges as a result of the Philadelphia Debacle!
☐ **D.P. 7 #4**—The Displaced Paranormals find their lives in jeopardy when they cross paths with the "Wompus!"
☐ **JUSTICE #4**—Out on Exit 14, life gets tougher for Justice on our world . . . as we learn more about Justice's home world!
☐ **STAR BRAND #5**—A Mediterranean dictator has threatened drastic consequences for anyone who crosses his Line of Death! Enter Star Brand . . . !
☐ **SPITFIRE AND THE TROUBLESHOOTERS #5**—Star Brand must fight Spitfire, and the life of a Troubleshooter hangs in the balance!

GRAPHIC NOVEL

☐ **ALIEN LEGION: A GREY DAY TO DIE**—It's a story so dangerous that it had to be told in a Graphic Novel! The Legionnaires face their deadliest task! The world's on the brink of annihilation! And Death is on the prowl! Written by CARL POTTS and ALAN ZELENETZ. Art by FRANK CIROCCO and TERRY AUSTIN.